



CONNECTICUT STATE POLICE UNION

Good morning Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrero and distinguished members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Andrew Matthews. I am the President of the Connecticut State Police Union, which represents approximately 1,051 Troopers, Sergeants and Master Sergeants and the Chairman-Elect of the National Troopers Coalition, which represents nearly 42,000 State Troopers around the country. Today we are here to speak IN OPPOSITION OF:

PROPOSED HOUSE BILL NO. 5383

**AN ACT CONCERNING ELECTRONIC PROOF OF AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE IDENTIFICATION
CARDS**

The Connecticut State Police Union opposes this proposed bill in the interest of Trooper safety concerns that are inherent with the passage of such a bill. For years, the standard has been an operator has been required to produce a valid insurance card per 14-213b. These insurance cards are requested by police officers and Troopers at motor vehicle stops, motor vehicle accidents and at other times involving an interaction with a motorist. This bill could jeopardize the safety of troopers due to the possibility that a trooper would have to take possession of the motorists' cell phone or other digital device in order to properly record the insurance card policy number.

Additionally this bill would be problematic in many ways despite any protection from damage to the device containing the insurance information that may be allowed in the bill. Though, claims against the State can be expected if the devices were accidentally dropped or damaged, and devices can range in price from \$300.00 - \$800.00 or more. Among other reasons problematic to this bill are the unfamiliarity with the multitude of devices on the market; the possibility of incoming text messages or phone calls that appear on the screen, creating privacy issues, or these incoming messages or calls may disrupt the Troopers ability to view the required information; that devices automatically lock screen after a period of time which would force the troopers to return to the operator to unlock the screen in order to get information and the possibility of false complaints made against Troopers regarding the access to information, contacts, photos on the device by motorists who may have received a summons from the Trooper.

More importantly and directly related to the safety of our Troopers is the fact that conducting motor vehicle stops whether during daytime or nighttime hours is a highly dangerous part of law enforcement. Police officers and Troopers are trained to keep their gun hand free and to be prepared at all times for the possibility of having to draw their duty weapon in defense of their own lives while engaging a motorist. This unknown danger is real with every police officer and trooper in the country everyday on every motor vehicle stop. This Bill would require the police officer and Trooper to take possession of the device in order to read the information, provided that ambient light and glare allows it to be read easily. By doing so, the officer or Trooper would be distracted from the occupants of the vehicle, while holding a flashlight in one arm to illuminate the passenger area of the vehicle by having to take hold of a device on which the insurance information was contained. This Bill could place every police officer and Trooper in danger unnecessarily on every motor vehicle stop if passed.